

WORSHIP IN THE TELUGU COUNTRY

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who will swoop down on them and do them some injury; though in other villages it is supposed that a great deal of noise and flourishing of sticks will keep the evil spirits at bay. Before this procession starts, the heads of the buffaloes are placed in front of the shrine, with the right foreleg in the mouth, the fat from the entrails smeared about half an inch thick over the whole face, and a large earthen lamp on the top of each head. The Pambalas¹ play tom-toms and chant a long story about Gaṅgamma till daybreak. About eight a.m. they put the buffalo heads with the lighted lamps upon them into separate baskets; and these are carried in procession through the town to the sound of tom-toms. All castes follow, shouting and singing. In former times, I was told, there was a good deal of fighting and disturbance during this procession, but now the police maintain order. When the procession arrives at the municipal limits, the heads are thrown over the boundary, and left there. The people then all bathe in the canal and return home.

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On the last day of the festival, which, I may remark, lasts for about three months, a small cart is made of margosa wood and a stake is fixed at each of the four corners. A pig and a fowl are tied to each stake, while a fruit, called *dubakaya*, is impaled on it instead of the animal. A yellow cloth, sprinkled with the blood of the buffaloes, is tied round the sides of the cart, and some margosa leaves are tied round the cloth. A Pambala sits on the cart, to which are fastened two large ropes, each about 200 yards long. Then men of all castes, without distinction, lay hold of the ropes and drag the cart round the town to the sound of tom-toms and music. Finally it is brought outside the municipal limits and left there, the Outcastes taking away the animals and fruits.

Sometimes, I was told, animals are sacrificed to Gaṅgamma by the people in Ellore in the courtyards of their own houses. They then clean the wall of